



PRESCHOOL FAMILY HANDBOOK

2017-2018 School Year

Be Friendly | www.friendlyhouseinc.org | (503) 228-4391



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FRIENDLY HOUSE HISTORY

Friendly House was founded in 1930 as a settlement house to help meet the needs of Northwest Portland neighbors. In the early days, we helped people who were out of work during the Great Depression. Later, we created programs for children, families, and older adults. Friendly House is still here helping those in need, whether it's due to a loss of work or home, age, or failing health, or to support families whose children need care and a great start in life. Friendly House offers activities, programs and services for people of all ages and walks of life. With a neighbor-helping-neighbor approach, our programs serve over 2,000 people every year, from newborns to elders.

FRIENDLY HOUSE PROGRAMS

Children's Programs include our Preschool, Playgroup, After School, and Summer Day Camps, providing social, recreational, educational, and enrichment opportunities for over 200 children each year.

Community Services include services for individuals in Northwest Portland and services to enable older adults to live independently and remain in their homes. We offer information and assistance, volunteer companions, transportation, social and fitness activities and more.

We are glad that you have chosen Friendly House Preschool as the place to entrust your child's care. We invite you to find out more about Friendly House and our activities for all stages of life. Please contact us at www.friendlyhouseinc.org or call 503-228-4391 for more information.

PRESCHOOL LOCATION, STAFF, & CONTACT INFORMATION

Locations: Dragonfly (Half-Day) Class - 1715 NW 26th Ave.

Ladybug (Full-Day) Class – 1726 NW 26th Ave.

Main Line: 503-228-4391

To report your child's absence: 503-935-5264

Ida Lombardozi 503-935-5266 ilombardozi@friendlyhouseinc.org
Children's Programs Co-Director: Early Childhood Education

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Preschool Head Teacher & Preschool Coordinator

Emily Salisbury 503-935-5264 esalisbury@friendlyhouseinc.org
Preschool Head Teacher

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Neighborhood House Head Start Teacher

To read staff bios for these Head Teachers, Administrators and Assistant Teachers, please visit <https://www.friendlyhouseinc.org/preschool>.

PRESCHOOL PROGRAM OPTIONS & SCHEDULE 2017-18



Dragonfly is our Half-Day Class, June to September

8–11:30 a.m., four days per week (Tuesday-Friday) or five days per week



Ladybug is our Full Day Class, year-round

7:30 a.m.–5:30 p.m., three or five days per week

The teaching day for the Ladybug class begins at 8:30am. Please ensure your child arrives by 8:30 daily.

August 25, 2017	Preschool orientation, both Dragonfly & Ladybug , 4-5:30pm
August 28, 2017	First day of Preschool, Ladybug
September 5, 2017	First day of Preschool, Dragonfly
June 7, 2018	Last day of Preschool, Dragonfly

PLANNED CLOSURES & EVENTS 2017-18

October 6, 2017	Preschool family fall social, both Dragonfly & Ladybug
October 13, 2017	Ladybug CLOSED for Teacher In-service
November 10, 2017	Ladybug & Dragonfly CLOSED for Staff Training
November 20-22, 2017	Dragonfly CLOSED for Parent-Teacher Conferences
November 23-24, 2017	Ladybug & Dragonfly CLOSED for Thanksgiving Holiday
December 18, 2017-January 1, 2018	Dragonfly CLOSED for Winter Break
December 18-December 22, 2017	Ladybug Open for Vacation Camp (8-4, advance sign-up & additional cost)
December 25, 2017-January 1, 2018	Ladybug CLOSED for Winter Break
January 15, 2018	Ladybug & Dragonfly CLOSED for MLK Holiday
January 29, 2018	Ladybug CLOSED for Teacher In-service
February 16, 2018	Preschool family winter social, both Dragonfly & Ladybug
February 19, 2018	Ladybug & Dragonfly CLOSED for Presidents Day Holiday
March 22-23, 2018	Dragonfly CLOSED for Parent-Teacher Conferences
March 26-30, 2018	Dragonfly CLOSED for Spring Break
March 26-28, 2018	Ladybug Open for Vacation Camp (8-4, advance sign-up & additional cost)
March 29-30, 2018	Ladybug CLOSED for Spring Break
April 13, 2018	Ladybug CLOSED for Teacher In-service
May 28, 2018	Ladybug & Dragonfly CLOSED for Memorial Day Holiday
June 7, 2018	Last Day of Preschool & Graduation for Dragonfly
June 8, 2018	Preschool family spring social, both Dragonfly & Ladybug
July 4-6, 2018	Ladybug CLOSED for Independence Day & In-service
August 17, 2018	Preschool Graduation for Ladybug
August 20-24, 2018	Ladybug CLOSED for Teacher In-service

***Dragonfly may close for 2-3 additional days for teacher in-services. These dates will be added to the calendar by Sept. 1, 2017*

PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

EDUCATIONAL GOALS AND CURRICULUM

The educational goal of Friendly House Preschool is to develop each child's individual potential for success, utilizing parents as the primary educators and influences upon the development of children. Each child is encouraged to develop social, physical and cognitive skills in order to promote a positive self-image. The program provides each child with opportunities to further develop their curiosity, contribute as a member of a group, and acquire self-control.

We use the Creative Curriculum¹ as a framework, while responding to children's individual goals. Staff hold curriculum planning meetings at least once per week. All weekly lesson plans will be posted in the classroom and published via the weekly printed parent newsletter. Please feel free to share ideas for specific projects with the teaching staff. If you have any questions about the curriculum, please contact one of your child's teachers.



CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT/DISCIPLINE

Be Safe ~ Be Friendly ~ Be a Helper

Discipline is based on promoting each child's feeling of self-worth. Developing *self-discipline* is the goal. Techniques that promote positive interactions in the classroom and preventative strategies, rather than reactive ones, are used. The classroom environment is designed to enable children to function on their own and within large and small groups. When inappropriate behavior occurs, children are redirected or given choices for more appropriate activities. We encourage the development of problem-solving skills, and avoid intervention when children are using these skills. Our three classroom rules are **Be Safe, Be Friendly** and **Be a Helper**. **We ask that ALL adults visiting the classroom model these three rules.**

No coercive types of discipline are used. If needed, a behavior plan is created with input from the teaching team and parents. Behavior plans are created on an individual basis in order to support the child's development and create a positive classroom climate. In rare cases, after alternatives are exhausted, we may ask that the family find another program.

INCLUSION PHILOSOPHY

Friendly House Preschool believes that every child, regardless of ability, has the right to participate in a broad range of activities and environments. The desired results for all children and families include a sense of belonging, positive social relationships and friendships, and development and learning to reach their full potential. Friendly House strives to achieve balance in the classroom that is inclusive of all children. We define the features of a high-quality early childhood inclusive program as **access, participation, and supports.**

¹ <https://teachingstrategies.com/solutions/teach/preschool/>

Access means providing a wide range of activities and environment for every child by removing physical barriers and offering multiple ways to promote learning and development.

Participation means using a range of instructional approaches to promote engagement in play and learning activities and a sense of belonging for every child.

Supports refer to broader aspects of the system such as professional development, access to community resources, and opportunities for communication and collaboration among families and professionals to assure high-quality inclusion.

Friendly House Preschool looks at each child and family individually and takes into account accommodations needed for them to reach their full potential. We strive to create an environment of mutual respect and consideration. Families can expect honest communication in terms of classroom needs, individual progress and recommendations for more support. In return, we encourage families, professionals and other adults involved to maintain open and honest communication regarding each child's social, emotional, physical, and educational needs.

Parts of this philosophy were derived from the NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children) and DEC (Division for Early Childhood) Position on Inclusion. The whole position can be found at the following link:

http://www.naeyc.org/files/naeyc/file/positions/DEC_NAEYC_EC_updatedKS.pdf

PROGRAM POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

PROGRAM OPTIONS

Sliding Scale Tuition: This program option provides a preschool experience for children throughout the greater Portland area. Fees are on a sliding scale; determined by your family income.

Portland Children's Levy (PCL): This option provides subsidized slots for income-eligible families and is administered by Friendly House. It is our intent to provide a preschool experience for children that would otherwise not have the opportunity. To apply for this option, you must complete a scholarship application along with your registration.

Oregon Pre-Kindergarten (OPK): This option also provides subsidized slots for income-eligible families living in West Multnomah County. The OPK option is administered by Neighborhood House, Inc., which conducts the initial intake and assigns children to one of several sites, including Friendly House Preschool. For more information on this option or to determine if you are eligible please call the Neighborhood House OPK Family Service Coordinator at 503-246-1663 ex. 7307.

Regardless of program option, children are integrated within the classroom, making for a diverse mix of children and families that provides limitless opportunity for growth, learning, and community building. The diversity in our classroom is a huge asset for all participating families.

FEES

Deposit to Hold Space: \$200 (goes toward tuition)

Monthly Tuition (base fee): Sliding scale; varies according to household income. The Current fee scale is available at friendlyhouseinc.org/preschool.

Vacation Camp: Sliding scale pricing by day (\$25-\$65), according to household income. Requires advance sign-up. Available on some school closure days to Hummingbird students from 8am-4pm. See school calendar for available dates.

Late Fee: \$15.00 (for accounts not paid by the 15th of the month)

Your base fee will be the same each month, regardless of school closures for holidays, vacation, in-service, parent conferences, or inclement weather. Student tuition is based on an annual fee spread evenly over 10 months for Dragonfly students or 12 months for Ladybug students. We do not pro-rate for missed days due to family vacations, child illness, or other absences.



ATTENDANCE, ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

Regular attendance is encouraged and may be required for subsidized slots. Your child must be signed in and out each day; sign-in sheets are located inside the classroom. Please call before class if your child will not be attending that day. **(Head Teachers' desk and Preschool Attendance Line: 503-935-5264)**

We ask that you or an authorized pick-up person be on time for both the start and finish of each class. If you arrive early with your child, please be prepared to stay until the scheduled class starting time as staff may

be involved in prep work and not available to supervise your child. If you are aware that you are going to be late for the end of class, please call and let us know. If we have not been so notified and no one has arrived to pick up your child by 10 minutes after the end of the class session we will attempt to contact parents. If we are unsuccessful we will call the emergency contacts you have given us. If we are unable to contact anyone to pick up your child, we will call the police.

Children may only be signed out of the program by the parents or other persons over 14 years of age designated as authorized pick-up persons. Picture ID will be required from authorized pick-up persons that are not known to our staff.

CUBBIES/EXTRA CLOTHES/ITEMS FROM HOME

Each child will receive a cubby that will be labeled with their name. Please ask your child to put their jackets and other outerwear in their cubbies on arrival. We also encourage you to bring a change of clothes and leave them in your child's cubby. Our full-day program includes a nap or rest period and families are encouraged to bring one small blanket from home to be stored at Friendly House and used for rest time only.

Please do not allow your child to bring personal toys from home. If a child brings a personal toy into the classroom they will be asked to put it in their cubby. We do allow and encourage children to bring one toy or personal item from home for sharing circle—your child's Preschool teacher will let you know what days sharing circle occurs. This item should be placed in the sharing basket upon arrival. If your child has a special comfort item temporarily needed for security, please make arrangements with your child's teacher.

Each child also has a mailbox by his/her cubby. Please check these boxes daily for art work, parent handouts and messages concerning upcoming events.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

In the case of snow, ice, or similar weather, Friendly House's first priority is the safety of our students, families and staff. Friendly House Preschool follows Portland Public Schools' decision on closures due to weather in order to prevent families or staff from needing to drive, bike, or use public transit in dangerous travel conditions. Please follow PPS's weather closures on Facebook, Twitter, or the PPS website.

If PPS is CLOSED due to inclement weather, Friendly House Preschool (both classes) will be cancelled.

If PPS has a morning DELAY due to inclement weather:

Dragonfly (half-day class) will be cancelled.

Ladybug (full-day class) will open later, depending on the length of the delay.

For example, if PPS calls a 90-minute delay, Dragonfly will be cancelled and Ladybug will open at 9 a.m. instead of the usual 7:30 a.m.

If PPS has an EARLY RELEASE due to inclement weather:

Dragonfly (half-day class) will operate as usual, 8am-11:30am.

Ladybug (full-day class) will close early.

For example, if PPS calls a 1 p.m. early release, Ladybug will close at 1 p.m.

In the event of an early release, we understand that it may be challenging for families to navigate traffic and travel conditions— please do your very best to arrive as soon as you can so that our staff can get home safely. If you will be delayed beyond the early release time, please communicate with us by calling our main desk at 503-228-4391.

EXTENDED ABSENCES/PROGRAM WITHDRAWAL

If your child will be absent from the program for an extended period of time you may retain your child's slot in the Preschool by continuing to pay the monthly tuition. If your child is in a subsidized slot an extended absence may require that the slot be filled with a child on our waiting list.

If you plan to withdraw your child from the program we require a minimum 30 days' notice. This notice is required in order to fill your child's slot with a child from our waiting list.

CHANGE OF INFORMATION

If there are changes in the information you have provided on your child's program application, please notify the director or one of your child's teachers immediately—you can also make changes yourself via your online account. **The following changes must be reported immediately:** address, phone numbers (home or work), physician/dentist information, emergency contacts, authorized pick-up persons, custody information/restraining orders, and medical or insurance information.

CHILDCARE EXPENSE STATEMENTS

Statements of your annual childcare expenses for tax purposes are not automatically generated by Friendly House. If you need a statement, please notify the Friendly House Fiscal Department after January 1. Statements will be emailed to you within two weeks of your request.

DAILY SCHEDULE

DAILY SCHEDULE

Our classroom spaces have a rich variety of learning materials including an imaginative play area, a math/science station, art areas, and more. In addition, we have a gymnasium and a preschool garden/playground. Our variety of learning spaces allow us to create intentional curriculum based on each space. Please see a sample daily schedule below. Parents will be provided with a copy of their child's class schedule at Preschool orientation and schedules will also be posted in the Preschool classrooms.



Sample Dragonfly Schedule (Half-Day Program)

8:00-8:25: Drop-off and choice activities or stations

8:25-8:30: Clean up and wash hands

8:30-8:45: Eat breakfast and brush teeth

8:45-9:00: Circle Time – songs, finger plays, puppets, music and movement, etc.

9:00-10:00: Learning Centers in the classroom – imaginative play, literacy and writing work, science exploration, etc.

Small group instruction with skill-building activities – pre-literacy skills, number concepts, color and shape recognition, and cooperation skills

10:00-10:45: Gross motor activities in gym or outside – balls, bikes, running, and exploring the garden

10:45-11:15: Wash hands and morning snack

11:15-11:30: Closing Circle

Sample Ladybug Schedule (Full-Day Program)

7:30-8:30: Arrivals and morning care

8:30-8:45: Clean up and wash hands

8:45-9:15: Breakfast and brush teeth

9:15-9:30: Circle Time – songs, finger plays, puppets, music and movement, etc.

9:35-10:45: Learning centers

10:45-11:15: Gross motor activities in gym or outside – balls, bikes, running, and exploring the garden

11:15-11:45: Small group instruction with skill-building activities – pre-literacy skills, number concepts, color and shape recognition, and cooperation skills

11:45-12:30: Clean up and wash hands and lunch

12:30-2:00: Quiet rest time

2:00-2:15: Afternoon snack

2:15-3:15: Teacher-led activities – art, board games, sensory tables

3:15-4:00: Dancing, movement activities, and group games in the gym or outside

4:00-4:20: Closing Circle

4:30-5:30: Free choice activities and after-care

5:30: Gather belongings and goodbyes

HEALTH AND SAFETY

CHILD HEALTH POLICY

To prevent the spread of disease, please keep your child home if they have any of the following symptoms or illnesses:

Fever, Vomiting, Diarrhea (in the last 24 hours)

Any Contagious Illness. Some common examples in preschool settings are strep throat; pink eye; Impetigo; ringworm; Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease; and pinworms. This is not an exhaustive list—if you are unsure if your child’s symptoms constitute a contagious illness, contact your child’s doctor.

Unidentified Rash

Restrictable Diseases (Chickenpox, Measles/Mumps, Rubella, Diphtheria, Hepatitis A, E.coli Infections, scabies, etc.)

If a child becomes ill during the day a parent will be called and asked to pick up the child from the program. If parents are not available, the emergency contacts will be called.

Children who have been infected by any of the above or any other contagious illness must be symptom-free for at least 24 hours before returning to school. **Please contact us immediately if your child becomes ill with any contagious disease**—we are required to post a general notice for families to see, per our childcare license requirements. Illnesses and other health-related information are confidential so we will never list a child’s name or other identifying characteristics on required health postings.

HEAD LICE

All children must be free from live lice in order to attend Friendly House Preschool. If live lice or nits (lice eggs) are found on a child, a parent will be contacted immediately for pick-up. The child must be treated and free of any lice before returning to school. Please contact us if you need financial assistance in purchasing lice treatment shampoo.

IMMUNIZATIONS

Immunizations are required by law for children in attendance at preschools and will be reported twice annually (in September and March) via a parent newsletter and the Friendly House website. All children in care outside of their home are required to have a religious or medical exemption on file if they are not up-to-date on all required immunizations.

MEDICATION

If your child is taking medication during program hours, the parent must fill out a medication dispensing form including type of medication, dates, and dosages before staff can administer it. This form is also available via your online account. **We can only dispense prescribed drugs from the original container bearing the original label.**

Our staff are trained in CPR and First Aid and will administer basic first aid, as needed (ice packs, band aids, etc.), if a child is injured. Parents will be asked to sign the Friendly House Incident/Accident form, which describes minor injuries, at pick-up, and will be contacted immediately by phone in case of more serious injuries.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

In case of an accident, the following procedure will be used:

1. A trained staff member will administer immediate first aid. If no further medical attention is necessary, an accident report informing you of the injury and the first aid administered will be completed and presented to you for your review and signature. A staff member or the Preschool Director will be available to discuss any incident.
2. A member of the staff will contact you if further medical attention is required.
3. If you or your designated emergency contacts can not be reached, a staff member will contact your physician or local emergency unit for treatment and/or transportation to a hospital. A staff member will accompany the child to the hospital and remain until you arrive.

It is vital that information regarding emergency contacts, doctors, etc. be current.

FIRE/EMERGENCY DRILLS

We will conduct fire drills every month. There will be an additional emergency drill each quarter to test earthquake preparedness or program readiness for other potential emergencies.

CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT PREVENTION

All Preschool staff members are required by Oregon State Law (ORS 419B.005-419B.045) to report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect to Child Protective Services or law enforcement agency.

One of the areas in which reporting is required is when children are picked up by someone who appears intoxicated. If the Preschool staff person believes that your child's safety is at stake, you will be asked to call someone else to pick up your child. If you insist on taking your child anyway and staff determines that you are driving, we will call 9-1-1. A report will also be filed with Child Protective Services.

SMOKING, HOT BEVERAGES, AND PARENT/CAREGIVER CELL PHONE USE

There shall be **no smoking** by staff or parents in close proximity to Friendly House buildings, while on field trips or while at the park.

We ask that hot beverages not be brought into the classroom unless they are in a secure container with a screw-on lid.

We also ask parents and caregivers to please refrain from using your cell phone when picking up or dropping off a child. This allows us to connect with you at the beginning and end of the day.

NUTRITION



MEAL SERVICE

A nutritious breakfast and snack are served daily. The menu is posted on the parent bulletin board. Food substitutions to the regular menu are provided to children with special needs, allergies and/or religious preferences, according to the information provided by parents on registration materials. Please contact the director should your child have a change in their dietary restrictions.

SNACKS/FOOD FROM HOME

No food products prepared at home are allowed in the Preschool program. Any food

brought from home must either be commercially prepared and prepackaged, or brought to school and prepared in our kitchen by someone with a food handler's permit. If you would like to bring a special snack to your child's class, please contact the director to assure that it fits within our nutrition guidelines. We ask that no sugar-based treats be brought into the classroom.

BILLING

For families paying tuition according to our sliding scale, bills will be emailed monthly to the email address(es) provided at registration within the first five business days of the month. Families receiving full scholarships will not receive a bill.

Your base fee will be the same each month, regardless of school closures for holidays, vacation, in-service, parent conferences, or inclement weather. Student tuition is based on an annual fee spread evenly over 10 months (for the Dragonfly students) or 12 months (for the Hummingbird students). We do not pro-rate for missed days due to family vacations or child illness.

Bills will be emailed by the fifth working day of the month and need to be paid by the 15th. Please make checks payable to: Friendly House, Inc.

If you are struggling to make your monthly payment, please contact us to inquire about scholarship availability and/or to set up a payment plan.

Failure to meet the contracted payment without prior arrangement or notification to the Friendly House fiscal office will result in a \$15.00 Late Fee charge. The following steps will be taken if payment is not received:

- 1) After 14 days (29th of the month), Friendly House will notify the parent that payment is past due. Contact will be made via email and/or phone call.
- 2) Any balances of over 30 days with no payment plan may result in your child being dropped from the program.

Please mail payments to Friendly House, 2617 NW Savier St., Portland, OR. 97210. Payment can be accepted by the receptionist at the Crawford Building front desk. We can also accept payment on any major credit card **over the phone, in person or online via [your online account](#)**. (The link will take you directly to your payment page, after prompting you to log in.) For your convenience, you can sign-up for automatic billing to your credit card each month. Please contact the director if you'd like to do so. Preschool teachers cannot accept payments, and should not be asked to. Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Feedback on the quality of services is welcomed and opportunities to improve the quality of the Preschool program are available both through talking with program staff and being involved with family nights and parent/teacher conferences. Parents' presence in the program is welcomed. If you or members of your household have skills or talents that could be shared with the children, please advise your child's teachers or the director. We will work with you to incorporate your skills/talents into the curriculum.

Friendly House has a variety of volunteer opportunities in which you can contribute your skills, time, talents and friendship to someone who needs your help. There are also opportunities to get involved in the operations and fundraising events of Friendly House. If you are interested in participating in any of these volunteer opportunities, please request a volunteer application from one of the Preschool staff, fill it out and return it to: Volunteer Program, Friendly House Inc., 2617 NW Savier St., Portland, OR 97210 or fax it to 503-228-0085. You may contact the volunteer coordinator at 503-228-4391 or volunteer@friendlyhouseinc.org.

PRESCHOOL PARENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

We are continuing our "Preschool Parent Advisory Committee" (PPAC), established last school year to gain valuable insight and input from our parent community. **Please consider joining our PPAC.** Please review details below and attend meetings, if you're able. Parents are not required to attend every PPAC meeting, but are encouraged to drop in when they can to provide feedback.

Preschool Parent Advisory Committee members will:

- Act as go-to parents for volunteering and/or organizing volunteers for tasks like: weekly laundry, selling Preschool jam, assisting with take-home book bags, helping with Preschool events like the end-of-year party. You don't have to volunteer for everything, but you'll help mobilize other volunteers within the parent community.
- Act as a sounding board for Preschool administration on topics such as hiring, the Preschool calendar, and any potential changes to the Preschool structure. We want your input!
- Be knowledgeable about the Preschool and Friendly House and act as a resource for other parents who may have questions.



- Act as a classroom volunteer on occasion
- Help organize Preschool field trips

If you're unable to make these meetings or unable to commit to this on-going responsibility, there are lots of ways to get involved, big and small, on a short- or long-term basis. ***Please contact the Preschool director for volunteer opportunities.***

There is also an electronic program evaluation at the end of each school year, asking for feedback on program services and quality. We do appreciate and value your feedback.

HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS

It is our philosophy as a program to not celebrate any holidays as part of our planned curriculum. We believe it is the responsibility of parents to decide what is important to their family and how holidays should be celebrated. We are open to parents coming into the program and sharing positive cultural or family traditions; please talk to one of your child's teachers to set up a time and format for such sharing. We do not have any formalized rituals in place to celebrate children's birthdays, as each family has their own preferences and traditions. Please contact your child's Preschool teacher if you would like your child's birthday to be recognized at school, and we will discuss it with you.

FRIENDLY HOUSE NOTICE OF NON-DISCRIMINATION

It is the policy of Friendly House, Inc. to treat all people with dignity and respect. The agency prohibits discrimination based upon race, sex, religion, creed, color, gender identity, age, national origin, marital status, pregnancy, sexual orientation, citizenship status, military service, veteran status, housing status, familial status, source of income, political affiliation, union affiliation, physical disability, mental disability or other protected status in accordance with applicable law. In addition, we shall not discriminate against minority-owned, women-owned or emerging small business.

USDA Non-Discrimination Statement

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English. To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at: http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights 1400 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email:program.intake@usda.gov.